



Everglades National Park



1997 Annual Report

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Superintendent's Introduction



"1997 was a banner year - but much remains to be done to ensure a restored and healthy Everglades National Park for the future."

Everglades National Park is pleased to submit this report on its activities and accomplishments for 1997.

1997 marked our 50th Anniversary. Commemorative events throughout the year were designed as both a look to the past and to the future. We remembered and honored those who worked to establish the park, past superintendents, and the long line of dedicated employees. The 50th Anniversary was also a chance to reach out to our national and local constituencies, on whose continued concern and support the park's future will ultimately rest. 1997 was a year of inclusion and reunion of the park with its local neighbors, who organized community celebrations of the park's anniversary in which we were proud participants. The Anniversary also focussed on the future. Led by Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, Florida Governor Lawton Chiles, numerous Congressional, federal, state and local leaders, and concerned citizens, we collectively renewed our commitment and resolve to address new challenges and new opportunities as the park moves into a new century and its next 50 years.

At the same time, 1997 was a year of solid accomplishment for the ecosystem restoration effort. On May 8, the Vice President announced the award of \$20 million of 1996 Farm Bill funds for purchase of lands in the east coast buffers project. To be matched with funds from the State of Florida, the grant will eventually acquire more than 60,000 acres of critical lands on the eastern boundaries of the remaining Everglades, to serve as additional water storage capacity and filtration for water quality. On June 17, in a special ceremony in the park, the Vice President announced the additional awarding of \$25 million from the same source for the acquisition of 31,000 acres in southwest Florida for rehabilitation in the crucial drainage and fresh water flow through the Big Cypress. At ceremonies on December 6 celebrating the park's 50th Anniversary, the Vice President announced the acquisition of the 52,000 acre Talisman property in the Everglades Agricultural Area for \$135 million.

The Administration's budget request for FY 1998 included nearly \$300 million for Everglades restoration. At the time of writing of this report, one portion of the request has been approved by the Congress and signed by the President that provides, through the Department of the Interior: \$76 million for land acquisition to include both the north east Shark Slough portion of the park and other joint Federal/State acquisitions elsewhere in the ecosystem; \$12 million to support a special science and research initiative; and \$11.9 million toward completion of structural alterations to restore water flows into the north east section of the park. Construction was started in 1997 on major structural projects to restore the park's hydrology in Northeast Shark Slough and to enable restored sheet flow to Taylor Slough.

In 1997, a three-year Fee Demonstration Program was launched to increase available funds to address a backlog of visitor facility maintenance projects. The park is one of 47 NPS areas participating in the pilot program. The park entrance fee was increased and new fees for boat launch and backcountry permits were introduced; 80% of the new and increased fees remain in the park. In the program's first year, \$461,000 became available to repair and upgrade visitor facilities.

1997 was a banner year - but much remains to be done to ensure a restored and healthy Everglades National Park for the future.

Richard G. Ring
Superintendent

Park Significance

Everglades National Park is the:

- ❖ Largest continuous stand of sawgrass prairie in North America.
- ❖ Predominant water recharge area for all of South Florida through the Biscayne aquifer.
- ❖ A World Heritage Site, a Biosphere Reserve, a Wetland of International Significance, and an Outstanding Florida Water.
- ❖ Home of fourteen threatened and endangered species.
- ❖ Largest mangrove ecosystem in the western hemisphere.
- ❖ Largest designated wilderness east of the Rocky Mountains.
- ❖ Most significant breeding grounds for tropical wading birds in North America.
- ❖ Site of significant ethnographic resources.
- ❖ Site of a nationally significant estuarine complex in Florida Bay.
- ❖ Only subtropical preserve on the North American continent.
- ❖ Major “edge” area of the northern and southern limits for many species creating a unique mingling of diverse temperate and subtropical species.

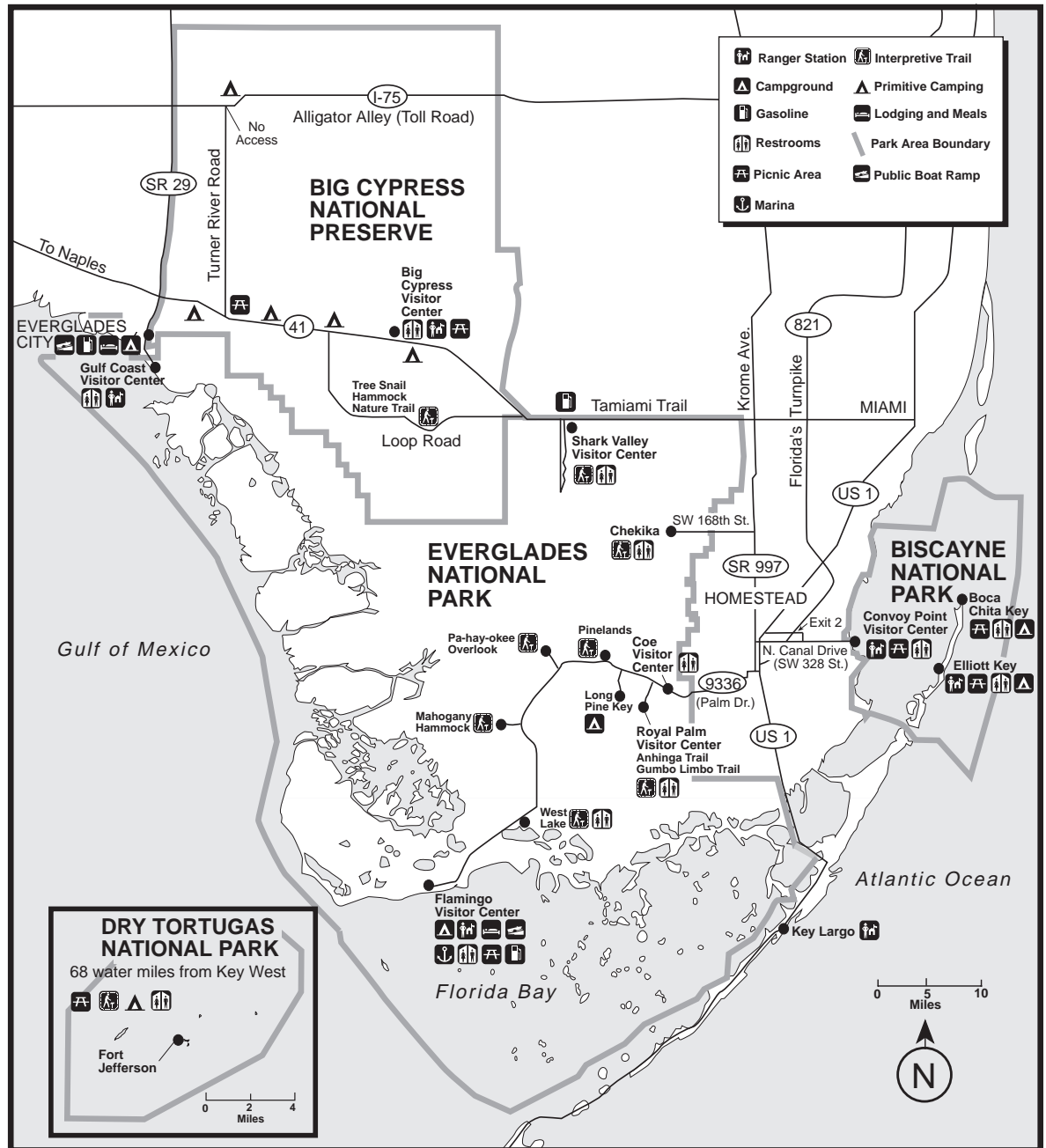


"There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth, remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them; their vast glittering openness, wider than the enormous visible round of the horizon, the racing free saltiness and sweetness of their massive winds, under the dazzling blue heights of space. They are unique also in the simplicity, the diversity, the related harmony of the forms of life they enclose. The miracle of the light pours over the green and brown expanse of saw grass and of water, shining and slow-moving below, the grass and water that is the meaning and the central fact of the Everglades of Florida. It is a river of grass."

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades-River of Grass*, 1947

Park Map

Everglades National Park is one of four areas of the National Park System in South Florida. The park encompasses 1,509,000 acres, stretching more than sixty miles north to south and forty miles east to west. It holds the largest expanse of wilderness east of the Rocky Mountains; 1,296,500 acres of this huge national park are protected as designated wilderness.



Park Facilities

"Everglades National Park ...shall be permanently reserved as a wilderness, and no development of the project or plan for the entertainment of visitors shall be undertaken which will interfere with the preservation intact of the unique flora and fauna and the essential primitive natural conditions now prevailing in this area."

Everglades National Park Enabling Legislation, 1934

Since the establishment of Everglades National Park, the development of visitor facilities has progressed according to a concept of preserving the park's wilderness qualities and keeping developmental encroachments to a minimum. This concept is consistently reflected in the park's legislation, planning and management; developed areas reflect, and are limited to patterns already existing in 1934.

The footprint of park development has remained relatively unchanged since the 1960's. As a result of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental legislation enacted in the early 1970's, there has been greater regulation of resource impacts from park construction. While park facilities have been periodically upgraded to meet changing standards and codes, there has been a consistent focus on minimizing development. Sensitive planning, design and construction ensure park facilities are appropriate, sustainable and of the highest quality. Today, the developed areas remain approximately as described in the 1979 Master Plan: occupying "less than 1,200 acres...", less than 0.1% of the 1.4 million acres contained within the original park boundary.

Rehabilitation of existing facilities at Loop Road and planning for the same at Flamingo and the East Everglades will emphasize meeting today's life-safety codes, accessibility concerns, and modern expectations, while limiting the development to previously disturbed areas. Where possible, disturbed areas will be restored to their natural state.



Development and facilities, such as the Royal Palm Visitor Center, occupy less than .1% of the park.

Development and Facilities

- 82 miles of surfaced roads
- 156 miles of trails (including canoe trails)
- 5 miles of surfaced trails
- 2 miles of elevated boardwalk trails:
 - Anhinga Trail, Pa-hay-okee Overlook, Mahogany Hammock, West Lake, Eco Pond, Shark Valley
- 160 educational signs and exhibits
- 3 campgrounds:
 - Flamingo, 295 sites
 - Long Pine Key, 108 sites
 - Chekika, 20 sites
- 48 designated backcountry campsites
- 3 fee collection stations:
 - Main Entrance, Chekika, and Shark Valley
- 301 buildings:
 - 5 visitor centers
 - headquarters
 - maintenance and utility buildings
 - 2 research facilities
 - 2 environmental education camps
 - housing for park and concession employees
- 3 concessioners:
 - Flamingo Lodge, Marina, and Outpost Resort motel and housekeeping cottages; restaurant; gift shop; marina and store; rental boats, houseboats, and canoes; sight-seeing boat tours.
 - Shark Valley Tram Tours
 - sight-seeing tram tours, rental bicycles, snacks.
 - Everglades National Park Boat Tours
 - sight-seeing boat tours, rental canoes, gift shop, snacks.

A Look to the Past and ...



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Everglades National Park

On December 6, 1947, President Harry S Truman formally dedicated Everglades National Park in a ceremony held at Everglades City, concluding more than two decades of effort by conservationists dedicated to making a national park in the Florida Everglades a reality. Throughout 1997, special events marking the park's 50th Anniversary were held in the park and in the neighboring communities. The celebration culminated on December 6, 1997 with ceremonies to rededicate the park and renew commitments to its restoration.

Community

The park's anniversary was celebrated in the neighboring communities of Everglades City, Florida City and Homestead.



Rededication

On the site where the park was dedicated in 1947, the Vice President, Secretary of the Interior, Governor of Florida, numerous federal, state and local leaders, and concerned citizens came together on December 6, 1997 to rededicate the park for the next 50 years.



a Commitment to the Future

Reunion



The employee reunion brought together more than 300 present and former Everglades National Park superintendents, rangers, maintenance workers, administrators, and volunteers to share stories of working in the park over the last five decades.

Anniversary Events

Dedication of the Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center
December 6, 1996

"River of Life, River of Grass" Documentary

Nature Photo Contest
(sponsored by the National Audubon Society)

Celebration of Dr. David Fairchild's Role in ENP History

(sponsored by The Kampong, National Tropical Botanical Garden)
February 9, 1997

Teacher Award Ceremony
March 1997

"Earthman and the Planet Earth Project" Concert Series
(sponsored by National Audubon Society and Miami-Dade County)
April-December 1997

Miami Herald article series
September-December 1997

International Seminar on the Management of Internationally Significant Protected Natural Areas in the Western Hemisphere
November 10-14, 1997

Employee Reunion
December 4-6, 1997

"A Look Back" - Superintendent's Panel Discussion
December 5, 1997

"One Community...One Great Celebration"
Homestead/Florida City Anniversary Event
December 5, 1997

Postal Cancellation
December 5, 1997

Everglades City 50th Anniversary Celebration
Everglades City, Florida
December 5-7, 1997

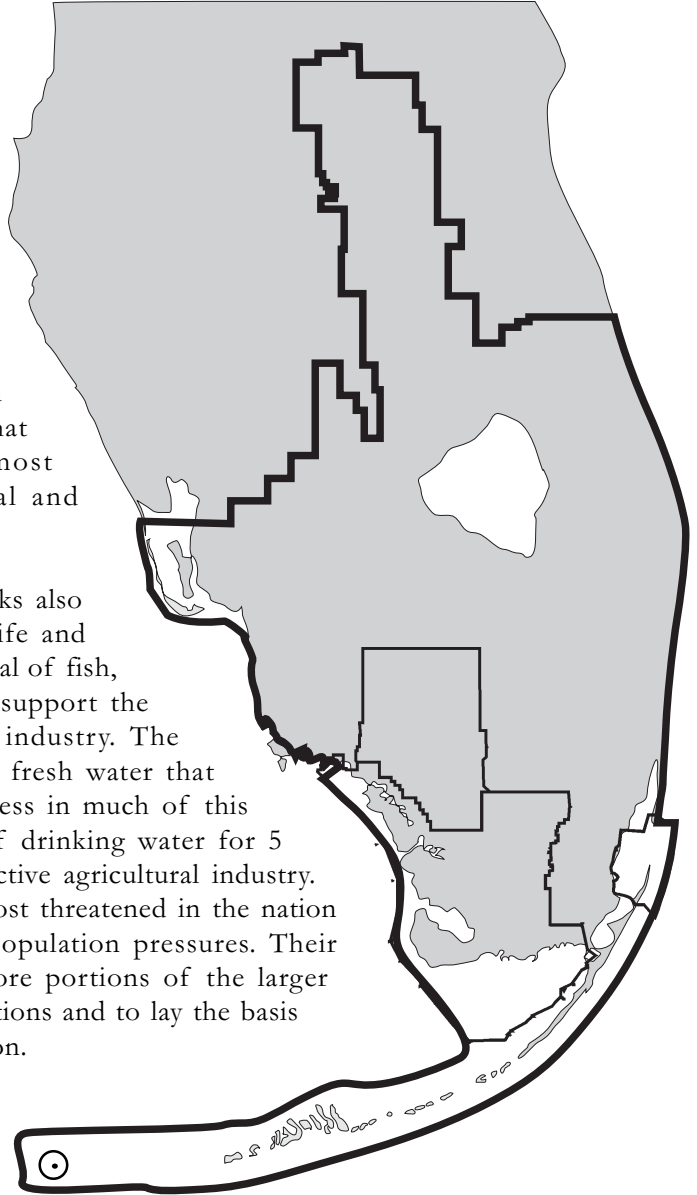
Rededication of Everglades National Park
December 6, 1997

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration

The National Park Service plays a vital role in efforts to restore the South Florida Ecosystem, an 11,000 square mile region extending from the Kissimmee River near Orlando to the Florida Keys. Originally a vast expanse of wetland, pineland, wilderness, mangroves, coastal islands and coral reefs; this is now one of the continent's most highly populated and manipulated regions. The national park units of South Florida protect millions of acres that embody some of the best and most complete examples of the natural and cultural history of South Florida.

The natural systems of the four parks also sustain South Florida's quality of life and economy. They are vital to the survival of fish, wildlife and recreational areas that support the region's \$13 billion annual tourist industry. The Everglades provide and protect the fresh water that enables people to live and do business in much of this spectacular area. It is the source of drinking water for 5 million people and sustains a productive agricultural industry. Today, these parks are among the most threatened in the nation due to external development and population pressures. Their survival is linked to efforts to restore portions of the larger ecosystem as well as its original functions and to lay the basis for a sustainable future for the region.

*The Everglades Ecosystem
encompasses most of the
southern half of Florida.*



PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESTORATION

The good news is the growing awareness of all interests in the region that there are limits imposed by nature on the volume and manner of growth. A strong public and private partnership is emerging to address the immediate needs of the natural system and to explore ways of achieving and maintaining a sustainable future for South Florida.

Building on over 10 years commitment by the State of Florida to "Save Our Everglades", the **South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force** and **Working Group** coordinates and develops consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs, and priorities for restoring the South Florida ecosystem.

The **Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida**, established in 1994 to "make recommendations for achieving a healthy Everglades ecosystem that can coexist and be mutually supportive of a sustainable South Florida economy and quality communities," makes recommendations to the governor and serves as an advisory body to the Task Force.

The **National Park Service** actively participates in the ecosystem restoration efforts, as members of the Working Group, the Governor's Commission, and other restoration groups. NPS staff are also involved in establishing goals for ecosystem restoration, evaluating the design and implementation of restoration projects, conducting scientific research, and monitoring conditions in the field to measure progress. Through ongoing interpretive and outreach programs, the South Florida parks are also committed to educating the public about the need for restoring the ecosystem.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration -Task Force (TF)-

Department of the Interior (TF Chair)
Department of Agriculture
Department of the Army
Department of Commerce
Department of Justice
Department of Transportation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
Seminole Tribe of Florida
State of Florida

-Working Group (WG)-

Natural Resources Conservation Service
(WG Chair)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. National Park Service
U.S. Geological Survey
USGS, Biological Resource Division
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
National Marine Fisheries Service/NOAA
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary/NOAA
Department of Justice
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Florida Governor's Office
Florida Department of Agriculture and Community Services
Department of Community Affairs
Department of Environmental Protection
Game and Freshwater Fish Commission
Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida



The national park units of South Florida protect some of the best and most complete examples of the region's natural and cultural history.

RESTORATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Get the Water Right

- ❖ Reestablish natural hydrologic functions in wetlands while providing for the water resource needs of the built environment
- ❖ Maximize the system's hydrologic interconnection
- ❖ Reduce the amount of water leaving the system, or lost to tide.
- ❖ Decentralize the Water Conservation (WCAs).
- ❖ Replace the system's lost water storage capacity.
- ❖ Minimize seepage of groundwater from the natural system into urban and agricultural areas.
- ❖ Prevent point source and non-point source pollution from agricultural and urban runoff

Restore and Enhance the Natural System

- ❖ Maximize spatial extent of wetlands and other habitats by acquiring land needed for restoration purposes
- ❖ Recover threatened and endangered species.
- ❖ Restore natural biological diversity and natural vegetation communities.
- ❖ Halt and reverse the invasion of exotic plant and animals.
- ❖ Reestablish sustainable wading bird populations and colonies
- ❖ Reestablish wildlife corridors.
- ❖ Restore natural estuarine and coastal productivity
- ❖ Increase hard coral cover on reefs.

Transform the Built Environment

- ❖ Revitalize urban core areas to reduce outward migration of suburbs and improve the quality of life in core areas
- ❖ Implement best management practices in urban and agricultural areas to improve water quality and reduce water consumption.
- ❖ Link agricultural and urban growth management with ecosystem management

During his June visit to the park, Vice President Gore participated in an interpretive demonstration with Park Ranger Toni Dufficy and a group of children. The Vice President announced a \$25 million federal grant to acquire 31,000 acres in southwest Florida for ecosystem restoration.



RESTORATION IN ACTION - ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 1997

- On May 8, Vice President Al Gore announced the award of \$20 million of 1996 Farm Bill funds toward the purchase of more than 60,000 acres of critical lands on the eastern boundaries of the remaining Everglades.
- On June 17, the Vice President also announced the additional awarding of \$25 million from the Farm Bill toward acquisition of 31,000 acres in southwest Florida for rehabilitation of drainage through the Big Cypress.
- On December 6, an agreement was announced, during the 50th Anniversary Rededication Ceremony, of an agreement to purchase the 52,000 acre Talisman property in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).
- The Administration's FY 1998 budget request included nearly \$300 million for Everglades restoration; including for DOI: \$26 million for land acquisition in Everglades National Park, \$4 million for Big Cypress land acquisition, \$40 million for joint Federal/State acquisitions elsewhere in the ecosystem; \$12 million to the park to support a special science and research initiative; \$11.9 million toward completion of structural alterations to restore water flows into the northeast section of the park.
- Construction was started on major structural projects that will restore the park's hydrology:
 - flood gate structures along the northern boundary for northeast Shark Slough;
 - a major pump station along the eastern boundary for Taylor Slough restoration;
 - degrading the levee along the southeastern boundary to restore sheet flow into Taylor Slough.
- Completed an Environmental Assessment on two elevated low profile bridges on the main park road that will restore water flows past the road into Taylor Slough.
- Construction continues on the C-111 and Modified Water Deliveries Projects and the Kissimmee River and Upper Chain of Lakes.
- Construction of the first of six filtering wetlands to clean up the Everglades was completed and contracts were awarded on three others as part of the Everglades Construction Project.
- A 51% reduction in phosphorous leaving the EAA was reported as a result of landowners implementing Best Management Practices.
- The snout-nosed beetle (*Oxyops*) was released to help control the spread of melaleuca.
- The Working Group:
 - established Issue Teams to address topics having a high level of complexity and requiring specific areas of expertise;
 - identified 35 new projects as Critical Projects to restoration, as authorized by WRDA.
 - initiated development of a strategy for a South Florida Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainability Plan; and
 - formulated and evaluated alternatives (a continuing process this year) for the redesign of the total Central and South Florida water management system.

Everglades National Park and the Gulf Coast Cluster

As part of the reorganization of the National Park Service, park system management is being approached along the lines of peer management teams. These teams seek to address and resolve issues affecting the allocations of resources, personnel actions, and sharing of specialized expertise among all members. This is in contrast to the traditional resolution of these issues from a higher level in the organization.

These management teams have been constituted Service-wide in various "clusters". These are generally along the lines of geographic proximity; a modified ecosystem approach to defining National Park System management. Everglades is a member of the Gulf Coast Cluster, which incorporates 21 National Park System areas from the Caribbean to Louisiana.

The Gulf Coast Cluster

Big Cypress National Preserve
Biscayne National Park
Brices Crossroads National Battlefield Site
Buck Island Reef National Monument
Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Christiansted National Historic Site
De Soto National Memorial
Dry Tortugas National Park
Everglades National Park
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
Natchez National Historical Park
Natchez Trace Parkway
New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park
Poverty Point National Monument
Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve
San Juan National Historic Site
Shiloh National Military Park
Tupelo National Battlefield
Vicksburg National Military Park
Virgin Islands National Park

Coordination Among South Florida's National Parks

Everglades, Biscayne and Dry Tortugas National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve represent key core areas of the remaining ecosystem. The South Florida parks are in the vanguard of ecosystem restoration, since restoration is crucial in achieving and maintaining long term resource integrity within the parks. Representatives of the South Florida national parks are active participants in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group and its constituent subgroups, and in companion efforts of the State of Florida. The South Florida parks are therefore providing leadership and key input into technical, scientific, and public information aspects of ecosystem restoration.

Given their close geographic proximity and similar natural and cultural resources, the national parks and preserves of South Florida work together to improve efficiencies in their operations.

The superintendents form a board of directors that meets regularly to address issues, resources, or responsibilities of an overlapping nature, coordinate policy positions on these shared interests and issues, and to review operations at all levels to promote efficiency and reduce costs.

Management oversight committees are also formed at the division chief level to coordinate specific program areas.

Other Partnerships

Ecosystems do not stop at political boundaries; their mutually shared values and influences are felt in a wider context. Everglades National Park has actively responded to its broader role by fully exploring its ecosystem interests in the South Florida and Caribbean contexts.

SOUTH FLORIDA LAND MANAGERS

Managers of protected areas under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior in South Florida meet on a regular basis. Meetings involve four National Park System areas and ten National Wildlife Refuges and are intended to move the participants beyond traditional agency barriers by building effective working relationships and better understanding of respective opportunities and constraints. The participants share information on new initiatives and developments and coordinate their efforts to achieve a more effective Departmental presence in South Florida.

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Everglades National Park continues to have a close working relationship with the sanctuary. There is shared recognition of the mutual influences between park and sanctuary administration, including Florida Bay, associated water quality, the coral reef tract, operations and management.

The park is a formal participant in the sanctuary's Water Quality Steering Committee. The sanctuary is an active partner in the ecosystem restoration effort. The park continued its collaboration with the Sanctuary in the production of "Waterways". This half-hour show explores the natural resources and environmental issues of South Florida.

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For the twenty-sixth year, the park worked with Dade County Public Schools to provide curriculum-based, on-site programs for nearly 12,000 students, teachers and parents. The annual "Envirothon", an environmental competition for high school students was jointly sponsored by the park and the school district.

AMERICORPS

Nationwide, the AmeriCorps program engages more than 20,000 Americans, of all ages and backgrounds, in a wide variety of tasks that contribute to community and national service objectives. Participants are provided a stipend for their work and receive credits against their future educational costs. Perhaps more importantly, they receive a personal learning experience in the values of service to community and nation.

Since the South Florida Ecosystem Project began in 1994, AmeriCorps members have made significant contributions to the South Florida national parks and national wildlife refuges, and to the greater Everglades and South Florida ecosystem restoration effort. During 1997, 108 AmeriCorps positions were filled in the Everglades/South Florida ecosystem program. The participants provided 97,200 hours of service at 22 host sites.

Everglades National Park provided initial management and oversight of the AmeriCorps South Florida Ecosystem Project on behalf of the Department of the Interior. In 1997, the Student Conservation Association assumed full responsibility for program coordination and

**-1997 Host Sites-
South Florida Ecosystem Project**

Everglades NP
Biscayne NP
Big Cypress NPr
ARM Loxahatchee NWR
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR
Florida Panther NWR
Hobe Sound NWR
Lake Wales NWR
National Key Deer Refuge
National Audubon Society
Florida Freshwater Fish and Game Commission
Florida International University
Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
National Marine Fisheries Service
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management
Department
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
South Florida Water Management District
Tropical Audubon Society
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

recruitment, with assistance from Everglades National Park in the selection of projects and host sites. Due to appropriations language for the Corporation for National Service/ AmeriCorps prohibiting funds for their programs from being directly awarded to federal agencies or programs with federal involvement, the DOI/ Ameri-

to Latin America and the Caribbean. Biogeographically, Everglades' significance as a subtropical coastal wetland and marine estuary means that its mission encompasses a shared heritage with other nations of the region, in terms of migratory avian and marine species, air and water quality, impacts of tourism, immigration, and general development and stability of neighboring countries.

In 1997, the park provided professional orientation and learning programs to over 450 foreign officials, in areas ranging from park management and operations interests, to ecosystem planning, restoration, and management. Notable visits included, Paraguay's President Wasmosy in April, and in May, EPA Administrator Carol Browner with the environmental ministers of the world's leading industrialized nations and the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service Institute Senior Seminar.

Corps program was not approved for 1998. 1997 was the last year for the Department's AmeriCorps program in South Florida.

INTERNATIONAL

Everglades National Park is addressing increasing levels of interest and demand for participation in cooperative professional activities with national park/protected area, tourism, scientific, and regional planning and development interests of other nations. The park's recognized international significance under treaty and multi-national agreements, and the unprecedented size, scope, and complexity of Everglades ecosystem restoration, have created an increased global interest in its management issues.

Geographically and culturally, its location makes it part of Miami's position as a gateway

Following initial consultancy work for management and visitor use at the famous cultural monuments at the Petra World Heritage Site in Jordan, Everglades National Park Deputy Superintendent Larry Belli worked to conclude agreements with the NPS Office of International Affairs, to continue cooperation with the Petra National Trust and Petra site managers to implement improved management and organization recommendations.

In September 1997, the Deputy Superintendent was invited by the Provincial Government of Ferrera, Italy, to attend their first international conference on wetlands parks. On this trip, he represented the National Park Service at the 75th anniversary of the Abruzzo National Park; Italy's first.

World Heritage Managers Council

In 1996, Everglades National Park hosted an initial meeting of the managers of U.S. World Heritage Sites. This meeting reached consensus, with the NPS Office of International Affairs, on the desirability of formalizing a Council that could better coordinate site management issues of common concern and to more effectively provide site management perspectives on the international program aspects of the World Heritage Convention. The Council was endorsed by the NPS and met twice in 1997; February in Denver and November in Miami. Through efforts of the Council, a revised public information brochure on World Heritage was completed and distributed in 1997.

Bahamas National Trust

Under the terms of the National Park Service/Bahamas National Trust Memorandum of Agreement, the park represented the Service at two meetings of the Trust Council and cooperated in two additional technical exchanges. Everglades staff:

- participated in a series of lectures, professional discussions and field visits on the problems and impacts of the exotic plant, Brazilian Pepper, on protected areas and natural systems in general, and options for control/eradication.
- joined in a cooperative assessment of fire management issues at the Rand Nature Center, Grand Bahama, and the Lucayan National Park. Recommendations were made for short and long term development of policies, staff, equipment, and training for fire management.

Brazil

In October, the United States and Brazil, under the bilateral agreement "Common Agenda for the Environment", signed a joint declaration designating Everglades and the Brazilian Pantanal National Parks as "Partner Parks". The interior wetlands characteristics of both parks provide points of common interest and the opportunity to share techniques and approaches to resource conservation and park management. Under USAID funding, the agreement will provide for a variety of technical exchanges during 1998.

International Seminar on National Parks

As one activity of the park's 50th Anniversary, a seminar was sponsored in November, with support from the World Heritage Fund and the NPS Office of International Affairs. Thirty-five park managers from the U.S. and Latin America participated. Sessions included briefings on Everglades National Park management and ecosystem restoration, and presentations by participants under the themes of education, science, economics, and ecosystem management. A declaration of principles was adopted that stated in part, "Experiences...of the Everglades/South Florida ecosystem are of interest and relevance on an international scale".



"Experiences...of the Everglades/South Florida ecosystem are of interest and relevance on an international scale."

1997 Performance & Results



The park uses the principles of the Government Performance and Results Act in goal setting, work planning and reporting of results. The following section summarizes the park's record in achieving its goals in 1997.

I. THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

To provide Everglades National Park visitors a variety of opportunities to experience the park's unique subtropical wilderness values such as solitude, tranquility, undeveloped expansive wetlands, and the abundance and diversity of wildlife and plants.

II. PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

To foster appreciation of Everglades National Park and its role in the greater Everglades ecosystem through acquiring an understanding of:

- the intermixing of subtropical and temperate plant and animal communities
- the wetlands wilderness landscape
- the role of water, fire, and other natural processes
- the effects of human activities
- the park's international significance.

III. HYDROLOGICAL RESTORATION

To restore the hydrological conditions within Everglades National Park to that which was characteristic of the natural ecosystem prior to human intervention, including water quality, quantity, distribution, and timing.

IV. Natural System Restoration

To ensure the preservation and restoration of a land and water base in Everglades National Park and the greater Everglades ecosystem to allow natural processes, functions, cycles, and biota to continue or be reestablished.

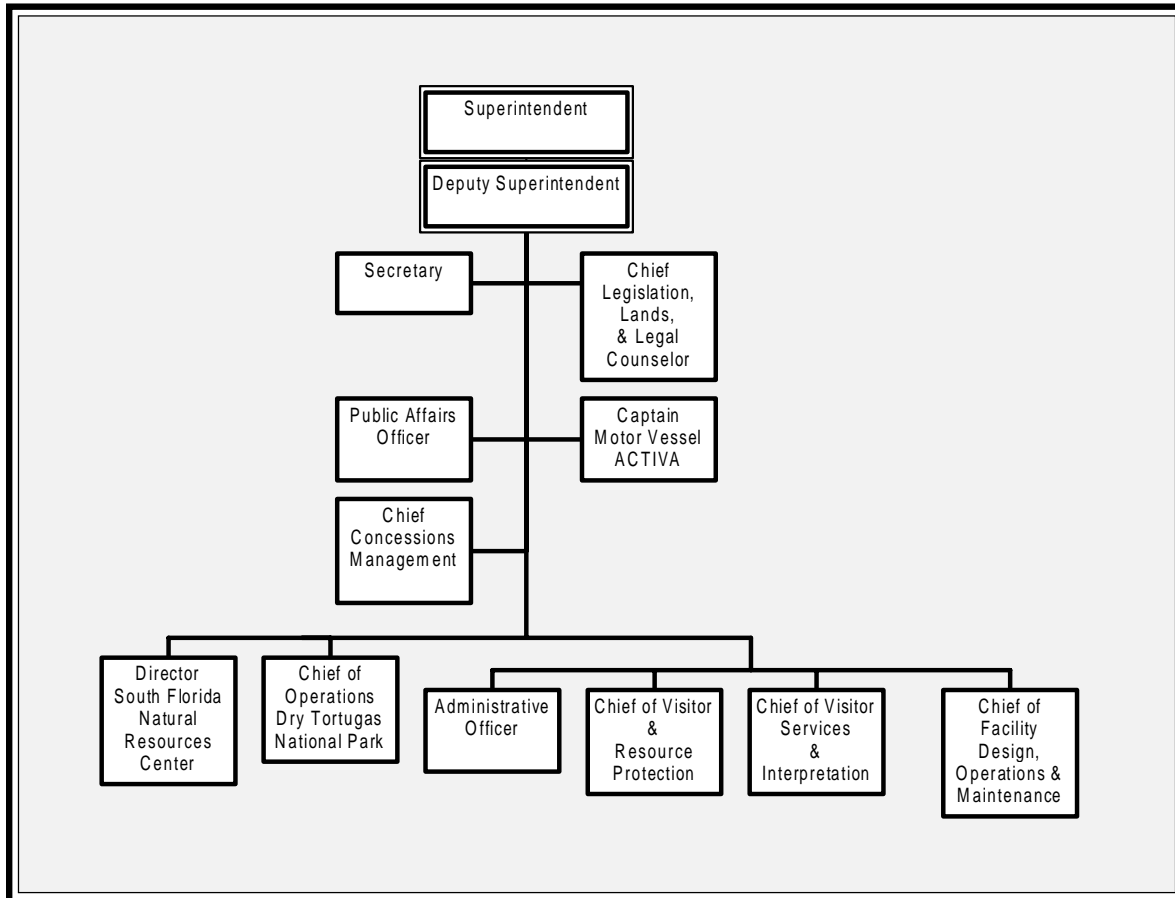
V. TRIBAL RELATIONS

To provide the opportunity for the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes to exercise their existing rights to the extent and in such a manner that does not conflict with the purposes of the park.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

To maintain a diverse, motivated, empowered and professional workforce in order to become a more responsive, efficient, and accountable organization.

Park Organization



Maintenance employees Butch Griffiths, Harold Turner, Rich Abern, Tim Moore and others were responsible for setting up the site of the 50th anniversary rededication ceremony in Everglades City.

I. The Visitor Experience



The Pa-hay-Okee Overlook offers panoramic views of sawgrass prairie and tree islands.

The Act establishing Everglades National Park requires that "no entertainment of visitors" be undertaken that would impair the essential wilderness conditions prevailing in the area. Such developments are at a minimum and the majority of the park is remote wilderness.

In the park's developed areas, the National Park Service contracts with private concessioners for a variety of visitor services for the public. These services include:

- **Everglades National Park Boat Tours** at Everglades City - visitors may enjoy boat tours, canoe rentals or browse the gift shop.
- **Shark Valley Tram Tours** - offers bicycle rentals and an open-air tram tour through Everglades prairie.
- **Flamingo Lodge, Marina and Outpost Resort** - visitors may stay at the lodge or rental cabins, enjoy dining opportunities, boat tours, boat, canoe or bicycle rentals, and a gift shop.

The park also issues Incidental Business Permits (IBP's) for tour operations, canoe outfitters and fishing guides. Permits allow these private operators to bring visitors into the park for a day of sightseeing, photography, canoeing or guided recreational fishing.



Narrated boat tours in the Ten Thousand Islands introduce visitors to the mangrove ecosystem.

Current condition:

- Despite continuing efforts, approximately 40% of all park facilities are in still in need of replacement; 30% are in need of longer term repair; and 30% are in acceptable to excellent condition.
- There were 46 recorded visitor complaints about facility conditions in 1997.
- 1997 rates for concession services were judged comparable to those charged in the general vicinity.

Desired condition:

Visitor facilities are safe, sound, sanitary, and affordable.

Current condition:

- Approximately 17% of park structures are accessible; as are all rehabilitated boardwalks.
- Interpretive facilities are generally accessible to special populations.

Desired condition:

Facilities permit equal opportunity access to representative park environments.

Current condition:

- The wilderness experience on land and inland waters is largely uncompromised.
- Effects of over concentrated use at backcountry campsites are noticeable.
- Subsurface wilderness continues to be compromised; 61 boat groundings occurred in 1997.

Desired condition:

Wilderness is unimpaired by human activity.

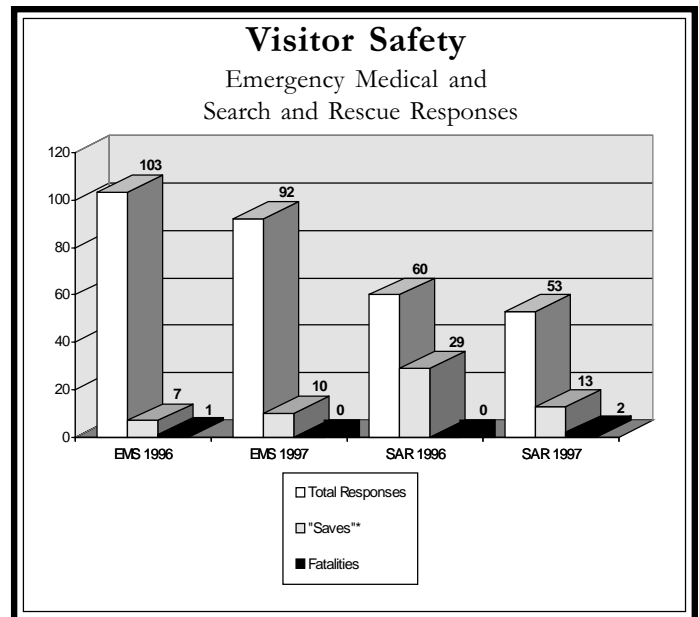
Fee Demonstration Projects

Construct Loop Road Environmental Education facility	Replace interpretive waysides parkwide
Rehabilitate boat launching ramps	Replace Mahogany Hammock boardwalk
Replace canoe launches at Bear Lake and Hells Bay	Clear Roadside vistas along Main Park Road
Cut back unsafe roadside vegetation	Rehabilitate nine public restrooms parkwide
Rehabilitate Flamingo amphitheater	Replace Bobcat boardwalk at Shark Valley
Replace roofing at the Flamingo Lodge facilities	Rehabilitate West Lake boardwalk
	Install elevator at Flamingo Visitor Center for accessibility

1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Everglades National Park:

- planned and implemented Fee Demonstration Program, including boat launch and backcountry fee program; \$461,000 was generated in the program's first year
- completed Vista Management Plan for implementation of Fee Demo Project
- began development of park Commercial Services Plan to identify types and levels of commercial services consistent with resource protection and quality visitor experiences
- completed the following projects in the Flamingo District to improve visitor facilities:
 - conducted a planning charette to begin preparation of a comprehensive site plan and environmental assessment for the rehabilitation of the Flamingo developed area
 - constructed 3 replacement restroom facilities in two loops of the campground
 - raised the berm around Eco Pond to comply with state requirements
 - rehabilitated 2 sewage lift stations
 - completed the design of a new water treatment facility
 - completed numerous repairs to the wastewater treatment plant
 - repaired the flagpole and illumination adjacent to the visitor center
 - cleared 16 miles of district hiking trails
 - trimmed and marked 25 miles of canoe trails and taped or replaced channel markers
- performed electrical upgrades at Royal Palm Visitor Center, Pine Island auto shop and RV pads in Flamingo housing area
- completed restroom repairs at the Gulf Coast Visitor Center
- started construction of the Loop Road Environmental Education facility
- trimmed roadside vegetation along 16 miles of road shoulder
- conducted 56 focus groups, involving 287 visitors, to determine visitor reaction to interpretive services
- issued 68 new Incidental Business Permits for fishing guide services, bringing the total number of permits to 265
- issued 26 Incidental Business Permits for touring and outfitting services
- participated in 1997 International Coastal Cleanup Day, removing 1,300 lbs. of debris.



II. *Public Understanding and Support*

Current Condition

- Throughout the year, the park's interpretive staff provides ranger-led activities to enhance the visitors' knowledge and experience.
- There are 160 educational signs and outdoor exhibits throughout the park that allow visitors to explore and learn about the resource on their own.
- The park's educational efforts are assisted and enhanced by its partnership with the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association (FNPMA). The Association, a non-profit organization, provides educational support to all four South Florida National Park Service areas.
- There were 754 violation notices/citations issued in 1997 for violations of park regulations, including those for impacts to park resources.



Park Ranger Laura Law leads visitors on a "slough slog" for a unique Everglades experience.

Desired condition:

The public understands the intermixing of subtropical and temperate plant and animal communities, the wetlands wilderness landscape, the role of water, fire, and other natural processes, the effects of human activities, and the park's international significance.



Educational signs and exhibits throughout the park allow visitors the opportunity to explore and learn on their own.



The park's off-site programs reached 10,323 people in the local communities and schools in 1997.



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT = HEALTHY ECONOMY: THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

Annual applications of the Money Generation Model (MGM) provide current information about the value of the park. The MGM was developed to use standard visitor statistics collected by national parks and extrapolate direct sales benefits, tax benefits, and job benefits.

These figures show that Everglades ecosystem restoration is not a classic case of “jobs vs. the environment”. Rather, in South Florida, a healthy environment means jobs for thousands of people in an economy that depends overwhelmingly on tourism.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS ATTRIBUTABLE TO EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK:

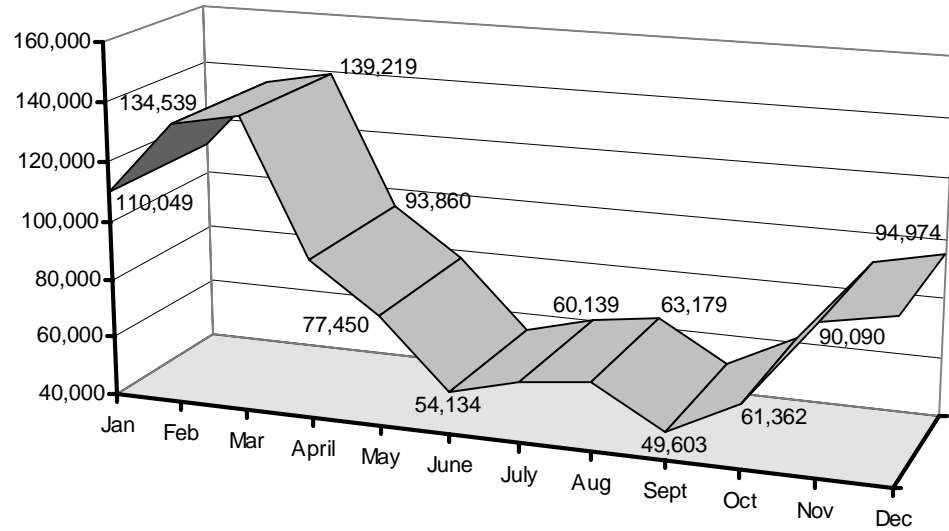
Sales Benefits	\$128,186,563
Increased Tax Revenue	\$8,332,127
New Jobs Created	5,307

In addition, visitor services and facilities provided by the three park concessions and the Incidental Business Permittees (IBP's) are economically important as these figures from FY 1997 indicate:

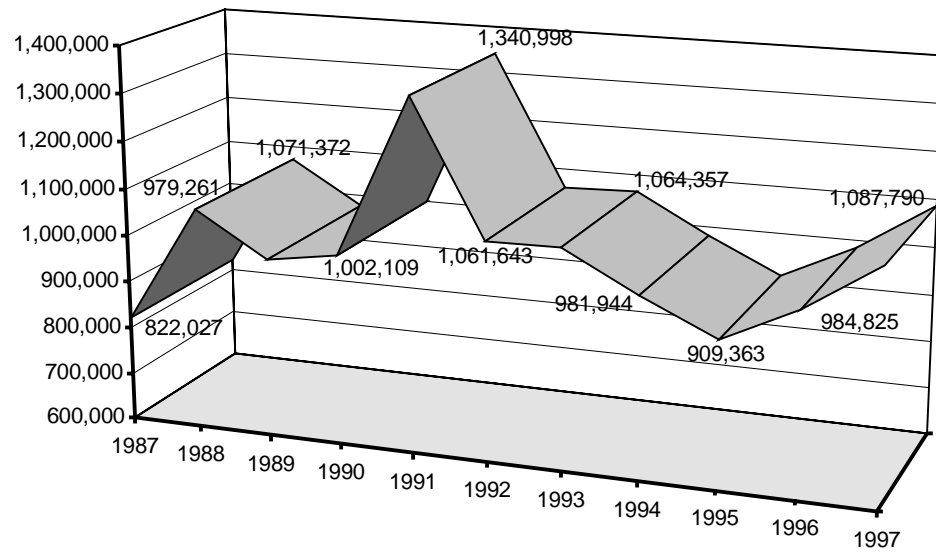
Concession Gross Receipts.....	\$7,750,000
People Employed by Concessions.....	305
IBP Gross Receipts.....	\$3,400,000
People Employed by IBP's	350

VISITATION STATISTICS

1997 Monthly Visitation



10 Year Visitation 1987-1997



1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Everglades National Park:

- carried out a yearlong series of events to celebrate the park's 50th anniversary
- received the National Park Service's "Best of the Web" award for the park's WWW home page
- visitor centers were utilized by 543,704 visitors
- reached 91,265 visitors through personally conducted interpretive programs
- offered an average of 115 ranger-led programs a week during the winter months, December-April
- 12,721 students, teachers, and parents, from five surrounding counties, participated in the park's environmental education program
- initiated D.A.R.E. program in a local elementary school
- presented 110 off-site programs to 10,323 people in the local communities and schools
- greatly enhanced outreach into adjacent communities through improved format and increased distribution of the weekly television program, "Waterways"
- FNPMA had \$544,103 in sales at its three ENP outlets. \$25,143 was returned to the park for support of educational programs and special events, including printing of informational brochures and curriculum materials, purchase of library books and scientific equipment, teacher workshops, and the park's 50th anniversary events
- 241 volunteers contributed 19,702 hours in FY 97, valued at \$315,232
- decreased wildlife mortality by 15% along the Main Park Road through aggressive enforcement of speed limits.



Everglades Superintendent Richard Ring and NPS Director Robert Stanton accept a proclamation from Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson in honor of the park's 50th anniversary.



Aggressive enforcement of speed limits led to a 15% decrease in wildlife mortality on the park's main road.

III. *Hydrological Restoration*

Current condition:

- Altered levels of phosphorus enter the park from drainage to the north.
- Excessive mercury levels are found in park soils, water, and wildlife.
- The park is supporting actions to determine acceptable nutrient thresholds and to reduce nutrient levels entering the park.

Desired condition:

Water is free of introduced nutrients and pollutants.

Current condition:

- Water is restricted in its various points of entrance with many pre-drainage flowways artificially obstructed.

Desired condition:

Water is distributed according to pre-drainage patterns.

Current condition:

- Water levels entering the park are artificially manipulated and may at times be unnaturally low or high depending largely on flood control criteria on adjacent lands and those north of the park.

Desired condition:

Water levels reflect naturally occurring rainfall driven quantities.

Current condition:

- Water deliveries are timed in response to flood control criteria rather than natural rainfall driven criteria.

Desired condition:

Timing of water deliveries corresponds to natural cycles.

1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

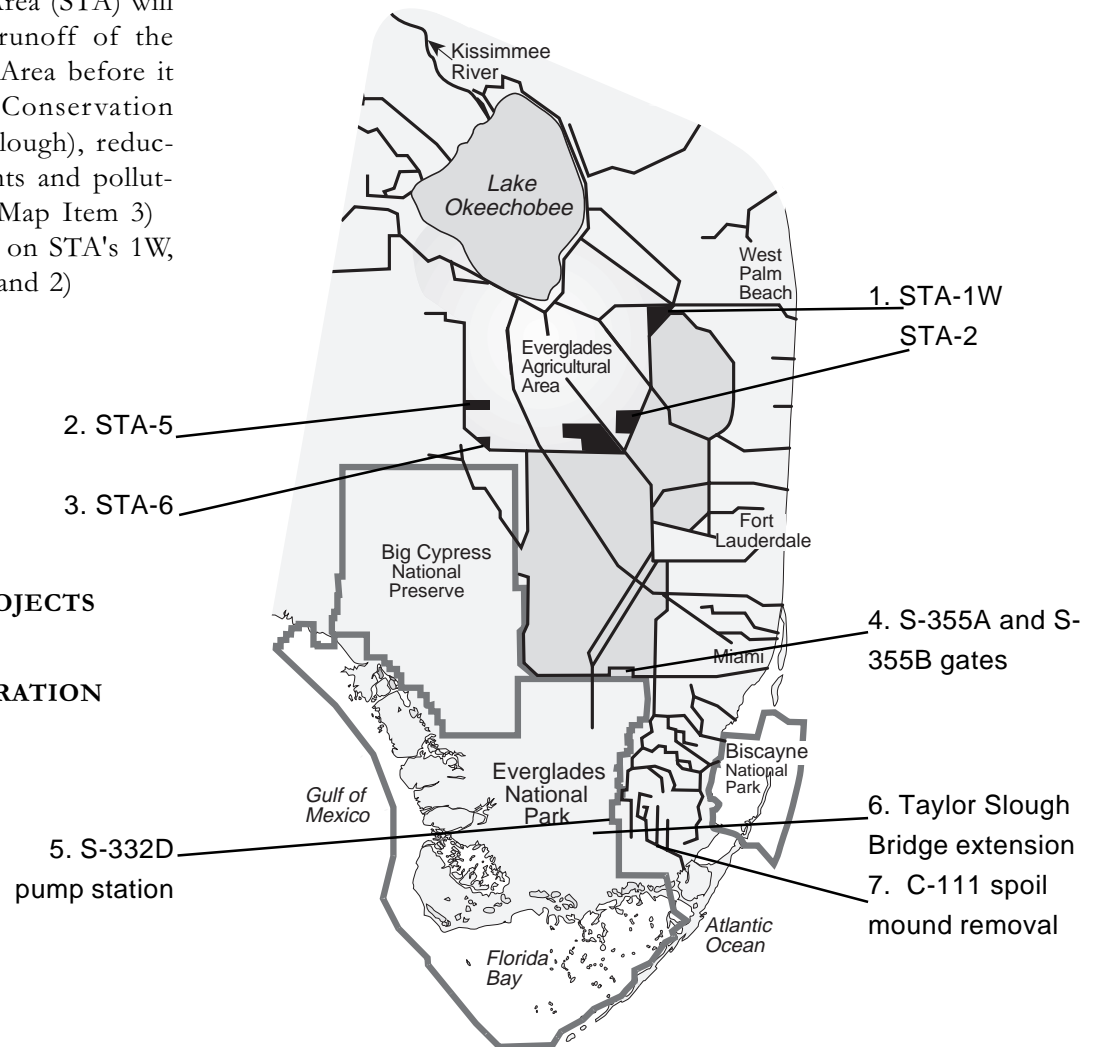
Everglades National Park:

- worked with U.S Army Corps of Engineers in preparing the Environmental Assessment for extending Taylor Slough Bridge. This project will improve natural sheet flow down Taylor Slough (Map Item 6)
- completed Test Iteration 7, Experimental Water Deliveries, Year One, Hydrologic Monitoring Report along with conclusions and recommendations
- installed an atmospheric sampling device (Brewer UVB sensor) at the SFNRC to monitor long term UV radiation and ozone levels in the park
- upgraded Marine Monitoring Network stations in Florida Bay and along the park's west coast
- produced the Florida Bay Water Quality Monitoring Report
- completed construction on three research flumes in Shark River Slough, which will be used to determine acceptable nutrient thresholds in the Everglades
- began research on supplemental technologies that will work in conjunction with constructed wetlands (Stormwater Treatment Areas) in removing nutrients from agricultural runoff to a level which does not upset the balance of natural Everglades flora or fauna

In addition, Everglades National Park worked closely with agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District, having primary responsibility for the following hydrological restoration projects:

- removal of spoil mounds along the C-111 canal has been completed restoring more natural sheet flow to the park's eastern panhandle and Florida Bay (Map Item 7)
- construction of S-332D pump station, which will restore more natural flows to Taylor Slough, was completed in December 1997 (Map Item 5)
- construction began on structures S-355A and S-355B, gated levees between Water Conservation Area (WCA) -3B and Northeast Shark Slough (NESS) which will restore the natural hydrology to NESS (Map Item 4)
- STA-6 Section 1 was completed; this Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) will remove nutrients from runoff of the Everglades Agricultural Area before it discharges into Water Conservation Area 3A (Shark River Slough), reducing the levels of nutrients and pollutants entering the park (Map Item 3)
- construction has started on STA's 1W, 2, and 5 (Map Items 1 and 2)

**CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
CRITICAL TO
EVERGLADES RESTORATION**



IV. Natural System Restoration

Current condition:

- The park is active in the Federal Interagency ecosystem restoration, associated restoration project design and implementation, the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, coordinated Federal lands management and integrated research in Florida Bay.
- In 1997, the park concluded 37 new cooperative agreements, bringing \$4.9 million in matching funding (Details on cooperative agreements are in the Budget section on page 33).

Desired condition:

Form partnerships to coordinate management, preservation and restoration efforts.

Partners in Science

Florida Atlantic University
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida International University
Louisiana State University
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Dade County Soil and Water
South Florida Water Management District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
United States Geological Survey
U.S.G.S, Biological Resources Division
University of Florida
University of Miami

Current condition:

- Recovery efforts for endangered species are ongoing, American crocodile and snail kites are increasing populations, while Wood Stork are staying at level numbers.
- Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow are declining.

Desired condition:

Native plant and animal species diversity and abundance reflect naturally occurring conditions.



Populations of the endangered Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow have declined as much as 40% since 1981.

Current condition:

- While the spread of exotic vegetation continues, an active project of exotics removal was begun in 1996 in the Hole in the Donut. In 1997, 200 acres of schinus (Brazilian pepper) were removed from formerly farmed wetlands.
- Over 250 acres of exotic plants, including melaleuca and schinus (Brazilian pepper), were treated or physically removed in 1997, including the removal of over 4,000 exotic plants in the Gulf Coast District

Desired condition:

Exotic species are eliminated from the natural ecosystem.



In 1997, the park conducted 18 prescribed burns, totalling 7,333 acres, to reduce hazard fuels and invasive exotic plant species and to improve wildlife habitat.



1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Everglades National Park:

- expanded cooperative research facilities at the Florida Bay research and management center at Key Largo
- completed installation of a salt water mesocosm in the Florida Bay District, in cooperation with South Florida Water Management District
- completed 3 key workshops on Florida Bay: Seagrass Modeling, Consumer Dynamics, and Paleoecology, leading to identification of important gaps in scientific knowledge and setting critical goals related to these topics
- issued the 2nd year contract of the Hole in the Donut restoration project for 220 acres of mitigation
- treated 453 casuarina (Australian pine) along all shorelines within the Florida Bay District
- conducted turtle survey in Ten Thousand Island area, in coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, resulting in the observation of over 310 nesting sites
- completed First GIS (ArcInfo) and Oracle database system interconnections
- conducted 18 prescribed burns, the largest number of management-ignited prescribed burns since 1985, totalling 7,333 acres, to reduce hazard fuels and invasive exotic plant species and to improve wildlife habitat
- managed 15 lightning-ignited fires (1,970 acres) that were allowed to burn their natural course

V. Tribal Relations

Current condition:

- Tribal representatives now participate fully and formally in ecosystem restoration planning and coordination, as part of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, its Working Group, and the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida.
- The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida use and occupy 333.3 acres along the northern boundary of the park, by Special Use Permit.
- The park assisted the Miccosukee Tribe with repatriation of Tribal remains.
- The park conducted cooperative law enforcement, emergency response, and structural and wildfire training with the Miccosukee Tribe.

Desired condition:

The Miccosukee and Seminole Tribes and the National Park Service coexist peacefully and with mutual respect, open lines of communication, and mutual understanding of respective cultures.

Miccosukee Indian students visit the Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center with Park Ranger Sandy Dayhoff



1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Everglades National Park:

- reactivated the Miccosukee/Tamiami Fire Brigade after a period of dormancy
- purchased needed equipment and participated in joint fire brigade training
- worked jointly with the Miccosukee Tribe to develop and present curriculum-based environmental education programs to tribal children and staff
- worked jointly with the Miccosukee Tribe in the production of an exhibit on American Indians of South Florida that will be permanently displayed in the Coe Visitor Center

VI. Human Resources

Current Condition:

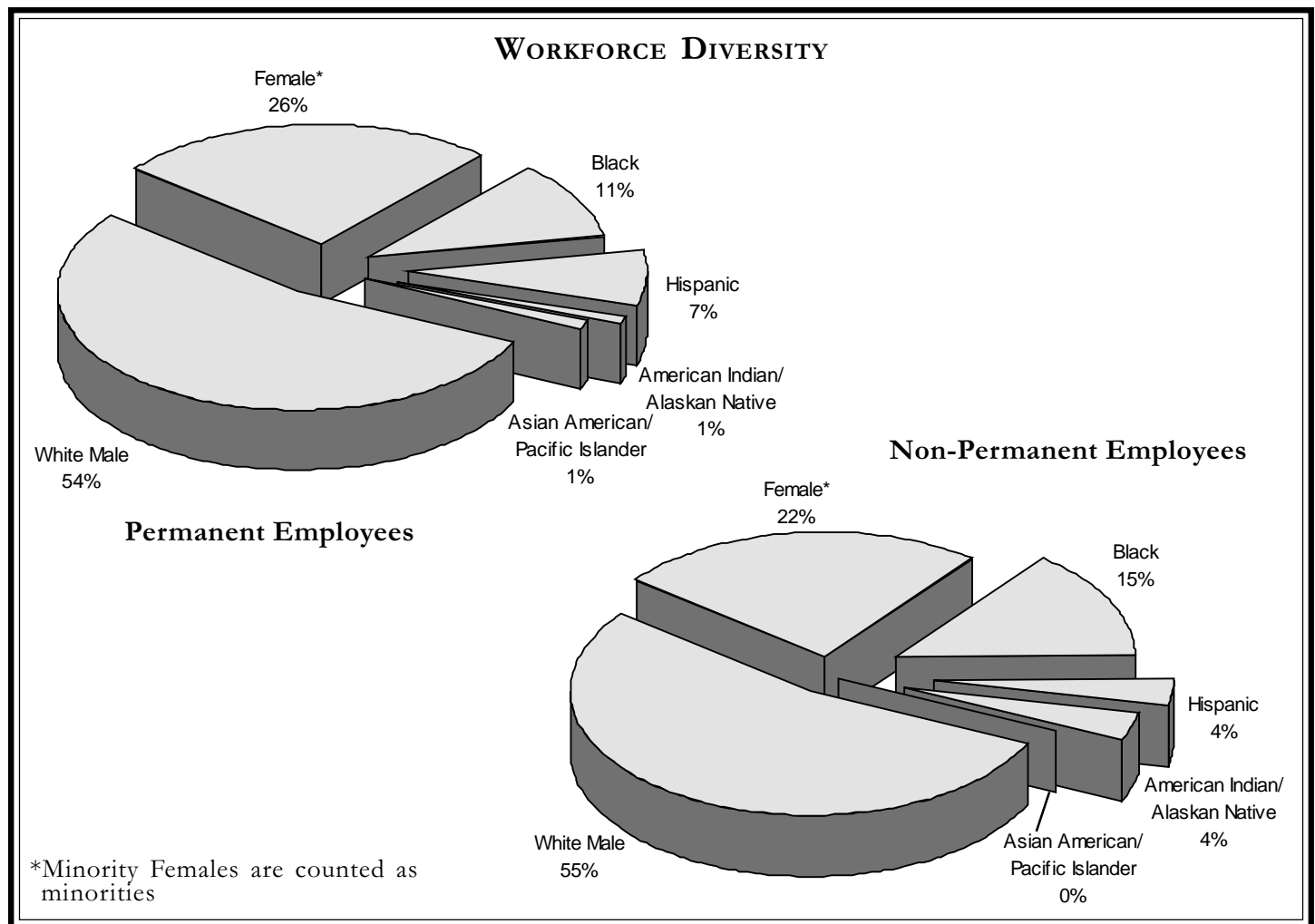
- Personnel management services are shared among five South Florida parks.
- There were 215 permanent and non-permanent employees on board at the end of FY 1997 with 36 vacancies.

Desired condition:

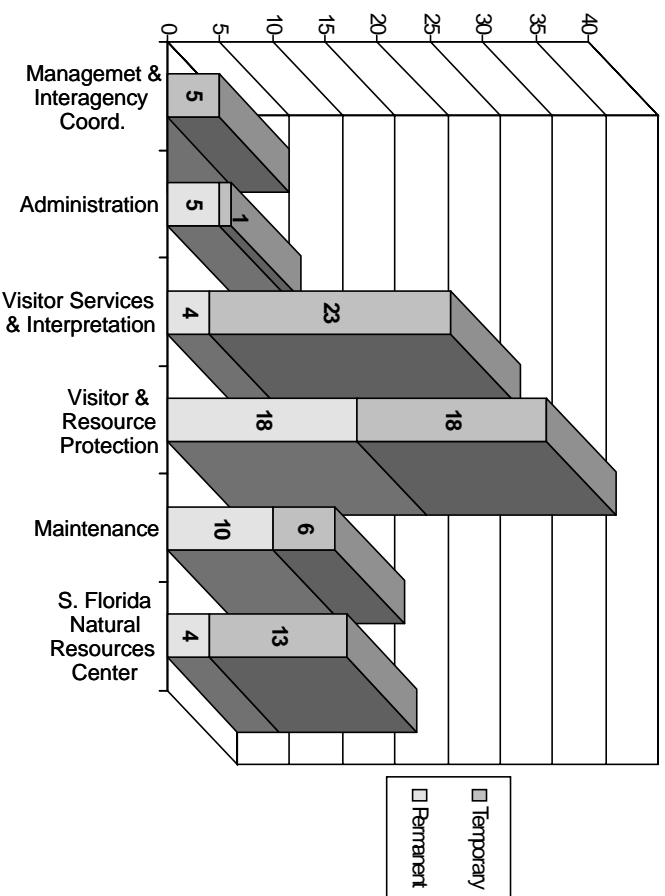
Provide employees with opportunities to directly enhance performance in support of the NPS mission.



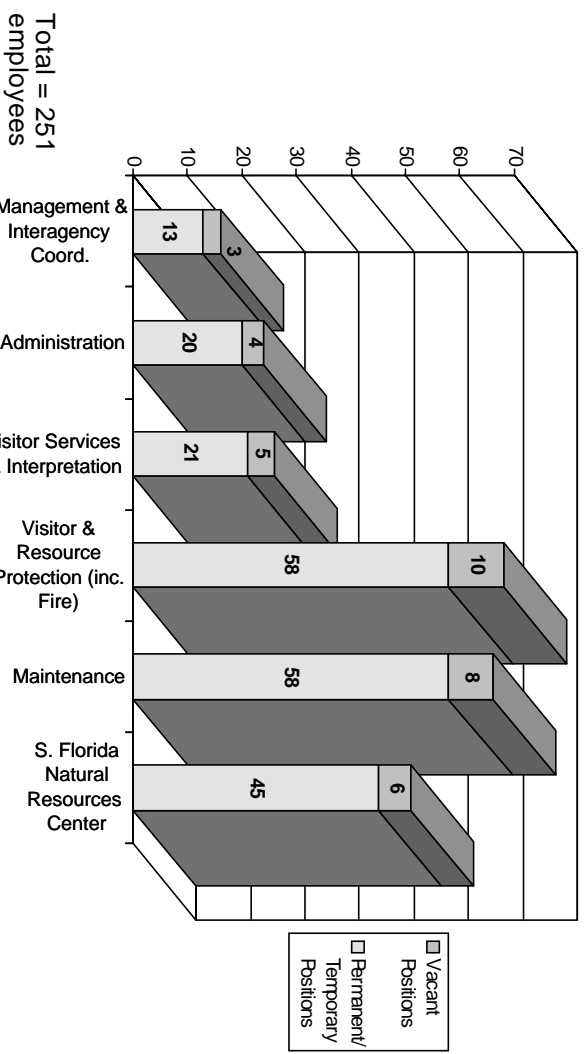
Maria Diaz-Devenney prepares payroll for up to 80 employees in the Visitor and Resource Protection Division.



HIRING STATISTICS FY 1997



TOTAL EMPLOYEES - By DIVISION AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1997



1997 RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

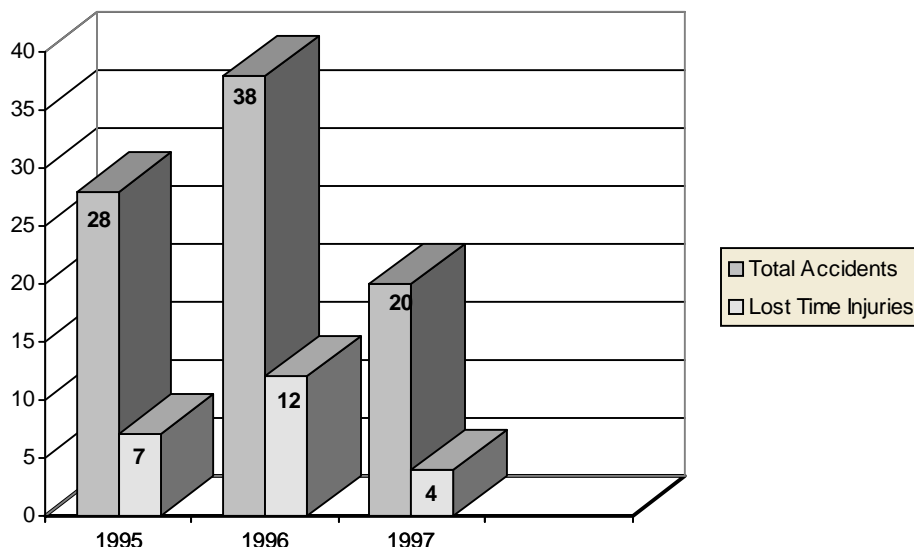
Everglades National Park:

- filled 41 permanent positions in FY 1997; 18 (44%) were filled by women and minorities
- filled 66 temporary positions in FY 1997; 27 (41%) were filled by women and minorities
- sponsored two National Park Service Leadership Seminars for 44 employees
- 91 employees attended performance enhancement/career advancement training courses for a total of 3,275 hours
- sent letters to secondary and college institutions in the local area offering internships in interpretation to underrepresented groups
- attended 6 school/career job fairs, 2 of which were minority oriented
- recognized employee contributions and outstanding performance through 45 awards totalling \$18,520
- processed 2,359 personnel actions for all South Florida parks, including 60 promotions, 1 suspension, 2 removals, 5 retirements and 7 resignations
- worker's compensation claims declined 47% from 1996



Jeff Brice and Leon Horne staff the 24-hour communications center, serving the 4 South Florida parks.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY 1995-1997

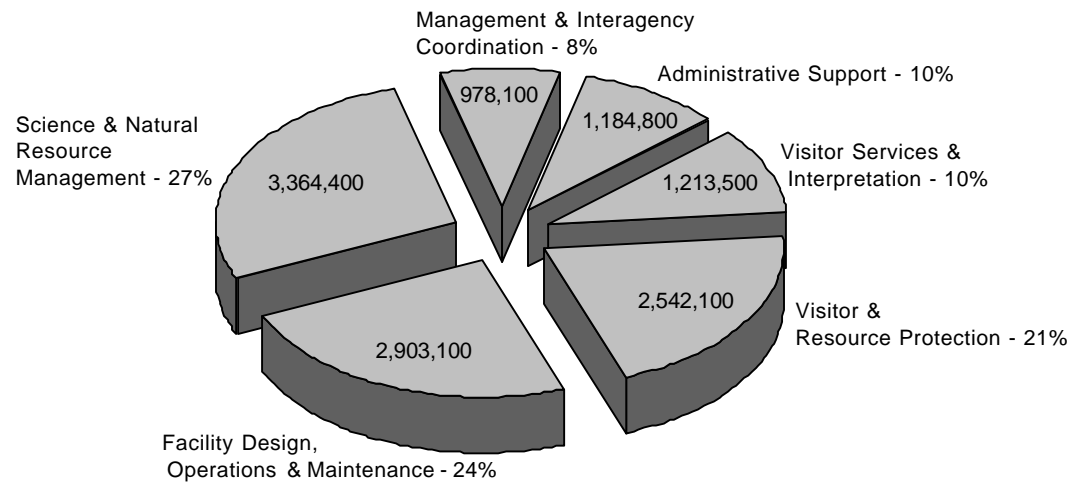


In 1997, worker's compensation claims declined 47% from 1996. The park's lost-time claim rate was 0.81, below the OSHA standard of 1.7.

Budget

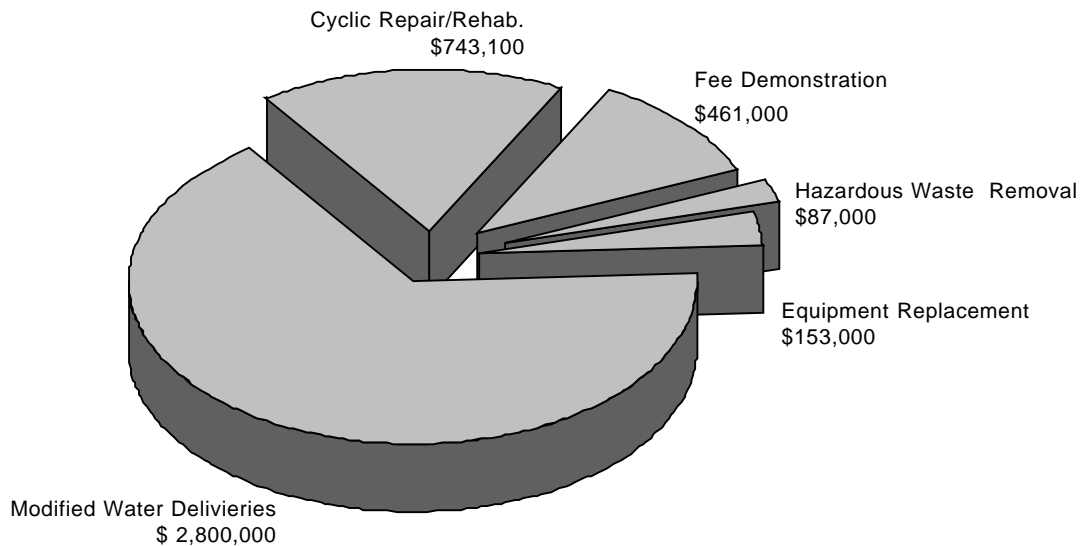
OPERATING BUDGET

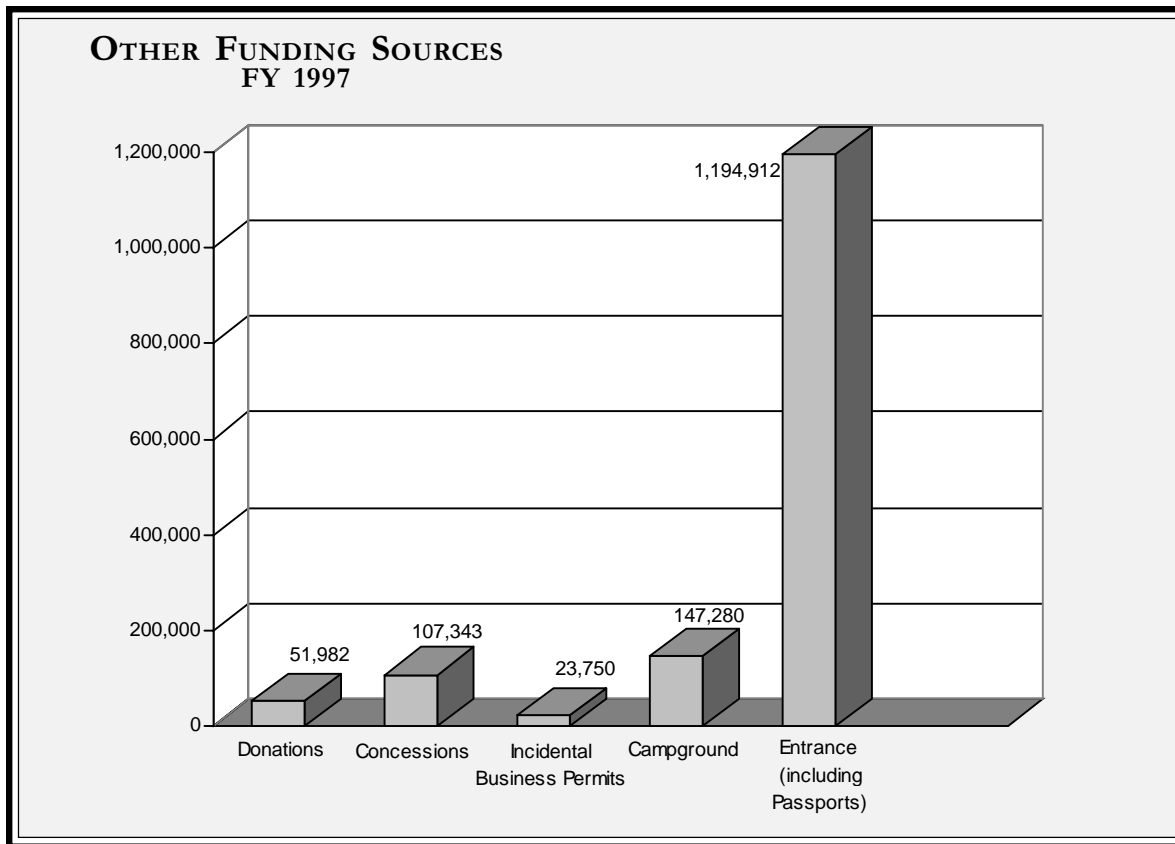
Fiscal Year 1997 Base Allotments



Total ONPS Allocation: \$12,186,000

REPAIR, REHABILITATION & CONSTRUCTION





COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

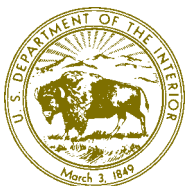
In Fiscal Year 1997, Everglades National Park concluded 38 cooperative agreements worth \$7,816,320 and amended 27 existing cooperative agreements with a value of \$2,078,617. Most of these agreements are for ecosystem restoration-related scientific research, monitoring and construction projects. Cooperative agreements fit into three general categories:

1. Money received by Everglades National Park on interagency and reimbursable agreements.

Number of Agreements:	20
Amount:	\$2,121,809
2. New cooperative and interagency agreements where Everglades National Park provided funds to another agency or organization for mission-related projects.

Number of Agreements:	18
Amount:	\$5,694,511
3. Amendments to existing cooperative agreements where Everglades National Park provided funds to another agency or organization for park mission-related projects.

Number of Agreements:	27
Amount:	\$2,078,617



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
Everglades National Park
and
Dry Tortugas National Park
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, Florida 33034-6733

